Unit 8: Business Applications of Social Media

Level: **3**

Unit type: **Internal**

Guided learning hours: **90**

Unit in brief

Learners explore how organisations use social media to promote their products and/or services, and implement social media activities for an organisation to meet its business requirements.

Unit introduction

Social media websites are a popular way for people to communicate and share information with friends and family. As people spend so much time on social media websites, these sites provide many opportunities for organisations to interact with people for a variety of purposes, including promoting their products or services and providing customer service. You may be familiar with the use of social media for personal use; in this unit you will discover how it can be used in an organisational context.

In this unit, you will explore different social media websites, the ways they can be used and the potential pitfalls when using them for organisational purposes. You will develop a plan to use social media strategies within an organisation to achieve its specific business aims and objectives. You will then implement the plan, developing and posting content and interacting with others. Finally, you will collect data on the organisation's use of social media and review the effectiveness of your efforts.

Understanding how to use social media to support an organisation's business requirements is useful for employment in computing and a variety of other sectors. Social media skills are also closely linked with web and mobile applications development. This unit provides a starting point for progression to roles such as a social media specialist, content developer or web developer.

Learning aims

In this unit you will:

A Explore the impact of social media on the ways in which organisations promote their products and services

B Develop a plan to use social media in an organisation to meet its business requirements

C Implement the use of social media in an organisation.

Summary of unit

Learning aim	Key content areas	Recommended assessment approach
A Explore the impact of social media on the ways in which organisations promote their products and services	**A1** Social media websites **A2** Organisational uses of social media for business purposes **A3** Risks and issues	A report that explores how an organisation can use social media to raise its profile and promote products and services.
B Develop a plan to use social media in an organisation to meet its business requirements	**B1** Social media planning processes **B2** Organisational requirements **B3** Content planning and publishing **B4** Developing an online community **B5** Developing a social media policy **B6** Reviewing and refining plans	Documentation showing the planning, preparation and implementation of the use of social media in an organisation which meets identified business requirements. Established social media pages dedicated to the organisation which fulfil the requirements given in the plan, accompanied by supporting documentation. Statistical data generated by social media websites, including an analysis of how it was used to optimise the use of social media. A report showing the assessment of search engine rankings A report evaluating the use of social media in an organisation against the plan, showing how well it meets the business requirements.
C Implement the use of social media in an organisation	**C1** Creating accounts and profiles **C2** Content creation and publication **C3** Implementation of online community building **C4** Data gathering and analysis **C5** Search engine optimisation **C6** Skills, knowledge and behaviours	

Content

Learning aim A: Explore the impact of social media on the ways in which organisations promote their products and services

A1 Social media websites

- Developments in social media affect the way organisations promote products and services:
  - Social media websites are constantly evolving and new features are introduced regularly.
- Features, structure and target audience of different social media websites, e.g. FacebookTM, Twitter, LinkedIn®, Google+TM and YouTube TM.
- How organisations can use social media websites to support their business aims and needs, including:
  - creating an image or brand
  - promoting products and services
  - communicating with customers
  - customer service
  - resolving queries and managing issues.
- Features of social media websites tailored to organisational needs, including:
  - advertising
  - website and mobile device integration
  - relationship to search engine optimisation (SEO)
  - profile on the sites, describing the organisation to visitors
  - usage data indicating profile of followers and effectiveness of posts, e.g. Facebook InsightsTM, Twitter AnalyticsTM and Google AnalyticsTM
  - audience profiles (age, gender, income) of social media websites.

A2 Organisational use of social media for business purposes

- Posting different content formats, e.g.
  - text
  - images
  - video
  - links
  - polls
  - quizzes.
- Content focus and meaning, e.g. information, promotion, humour, special offers and customer service.
- Developing an audience and encouraging people to follow or 'like' the organisation through the creation and use of engaging content.
- Keywords and their use in posted content.
- Developing contacts by following and linking to relevant organisations and individuals, and sharing content posted by others.
- Direct and indirect advertising.
- Links to commercial information, e.g. organisation's website, e-commerce websites.
- Relationship between the social media website and an organisation's website, e.g. using:
  - social media buttons on the organisation's website
  - organisation's website links within social media posts
  - social media news feeds on the organisation's website.

A3 Risks and issues

- Negative comments on social media sites and damage to reputation.
- Time constraints on social media interaction, return on time investment.
- Unforeseen consequences of posted content.
- Increased vulnerability to cyber criminals.

Learning aim B: Develop a plan to use social media in an organisation to meet its business requirements

B1 Social media planning processes

Processes to consider when planning the potential use of social media in an organisation, including:

- the specific requirements of the organisation
- content planning and publishing
- developing online communities
- enforcing social media policies.

B2 Organisational requirements

Working with a client to set requirements for the use of social media and the potential benefits for the organisation when compared to traditional promotion methods.

- Establishing timescales and responsibilities for the use of social media within an organisation.
- Identifying criteria for measuring the successful use of social media within an organisation.
- Selection of social media websites to use by matching site profiles to requirements, in terms of an organisation's business use of social media.
- Identifying targets for the use of social media, number of followers, 'likes' and 'shares'.

B3 Content planning and publishing

Planning posts and other content to be published on social media websites, including:

- identifying a target audience e.g.
  - age
  - gender
  - interest
  - income
- linking type of content to target audience to ensure it is engaging
- researching keywords (e.g. Google AdwordsTM) and creating keyword strategies to help users identify content
- researching the best time to publish content and creating a publishing schedule (type of content, frequency, day and time).

B4 Developing an online community

Working with a client to develop a strategy to encourage online community building, including:

- use of promotional techniques, e.g.
  - requesting feedback
  - surveys
  - special offers or initiatives
  - creating links between social media websites and the organisation's website
- monitoring social media website streams and responding to queries, requests and complaints.

B5 Developing a social media policy

Working with a client to create a social media policy applicable to an organisation's business needs, including:

- the organisation's philosophy (identifying and reflecting this in posted content)
- promotion of honesty and respect in posted content
- ways to ensure confidentiality of information
- methods of dealing with security issues
- separation of company and personal content
- legal and ethical considerations.

B6 Reviewing and refining plans

Working with a client and other relevant stakeholders to improve the quality, effectiveness and appropriateness of the plans, including:

- gathering feedback from a client and potential users
- communicating with a client, e.g. email, verbal communication
- scheduling and documenting meetings
- agreeing and adjusting timescales
- refining ideas and solutions.

Learning aim C: Implement the use of social media in an organisation

Selection and use of appropriate social media website tools and techniques to implement a plan.

C1 Creating accounts and profiles

- Sign-up, creation and administration of social media website organisation accounts.
- Creation and set-up of a profile for the organisation.
- Customisation and configuration of the organisation's profile, including privacy settings, colour schemes, images, text and other assets that follow branding guidelines.

C2 Content creation and publication

- Carry out research in order to produce engaging content for the intended target audience.
- Produce, publish and manage content.
- Improve visibility of published content.
- Methods to encourage audience interaction, e.g. use of images, phrasing of text content, timing of posts to coincide with times when followers are online.
- Integration of information across the organisation's website and social media websites.
- Adapting and testing content on different device platforms, e.g. mobile phones, tablets and notebooks.

C3 Implementation of online community building

- Implementation of an online community building strategy, including:
  - use of hashtags, sharing and tagging
  - finding and joining groups and contributing information
  - following people and other organisations or businesses.
- Monitoring and responding to comments, importance of prompt responses.
- Using tools and techniques to automate content posting.

C4 Data gathering and analysis

Gathering and interpreting data on social media websites using dedicated tools, e.g. Facebook Insights™, Twitter Analytics™, Google Analytics™ and TweetReach™.

- Identifying interaction relating to individual posts.
- Identifying audience profiles, e.g. age, location.
- Monitoring number of 'likes' and 'shares'.
- Comparison of intended target audience versus actual audience.
- Identification of posts and types of content which create the highest levels of interaction.

C5 Search engine optimisation

- Principles of search engine optimisation, including:
  - keyword research and strategy
  - website URL and content
  - significance of regular updates
  - importance of inbound links and ways of developing them
  - timescales for achieving change in search engine rankings.
- Monitoring website interaction.
- Social media links to search engine optimisation, including:

- social media profiles
- use of keywords in content
- use of social media to encourage visitors to the company website
- importance of search engine rankings linked to a social media service (Google+TM).

C6 Skills, knowledge and behaviours

- Planning and recording, including the setting of relevant targets with timescales; how and when feedback from others, such as customers and social media followers, will be gathered.
- Reviewing and responding to outcomes, including the use of feedback from others, e.g. customers and social media followers who can provide feedback on the quality and suitability of the features against the organisation's business requirements.
- Demonstrate own behaviours and their impact on outcomes, to include professionalism, etiquette, being supportive of others, timely and appropriate leadership, accountability and individual responsibility.
- Evaluating outcomes to help inform high-quality justified recommendations and decisions.
- Evaluating targets to obtain insights into own performance.
- Media and communication skills, including:
  - the ability to convey intended meaning, e.g. written (email, design documentation, recording documentation, reports, visual aids for presentation use.); verbal communication requirements (one to one and group, informal and formal situations)
  - use of tone and language for verbal and written communications to convey intended meaning and make a positive and constructive impact on audience, e.g. positive and engaging tone, technical/ vocational language suitable for intended audience, avoidance of jargon.
  - responding constructively to the contributions of others, e.g. supportive, managing contributions so all have the opportunity to contribute, responding to objections, managing expectation, resolving conflict.

Assessment criteria

Pass	Merit	Distinction
Learning aim A: Explore the impact of social media on the ways in which organisations promote their products and services		**A.D1** Evaluate the organisational use of social media to interact with customers and promote products or services to a target audience.
A.P1 Explain the different ways in which an organisation can use social media to promote products or services to a target audience. **A.P2** Explain the audience profiles of different social media websites.	**A.M1** Assess the different ways in which an organisation can use social media to promote products or services to a target audience.	
Learning aim B: Develop a plan to use social media in an organisation to meet its business requirements		**BC.D2** Evaluate the plan and use of social media in an organisation against its business requirements. **BC.D3** Demonstrate individual responsibility, creativity, and effective self-management in the planning and use of social media in an organisational context.
B.P3 Produce a plan to use social media in an organisation to meet its business requirements. **B.P4** Review the plan with others in order to identify and inform improvements.	**B.M2** Justify planning decisions made, showing how the plan will fulfil its purpose and the organisation's business requirements.	
Learning aim C: Implement the use of social media in an organisation		
C.P5 Produce business-related content for an organisation, using appropriate features of social media that meet the requirements of the plan. **C.P6** Review data obtained on social media usage and interaction. **C.P7** Assess the extent to which social media content and format improved search engine rankings.	**C.M3** Optimise the content, format and features of social media that meet the requirements of the plan.	

Essential information for assignments

The recommended structure of assessment is shown in the unit summary, along with suitable forms of evidence. *Section 6* gives information on setting assignments and there is further information on our website.

There is a maximum number of two summative assignments for this unit. The relationship of the learning aims and criteria is:

Learning aim: A (A.P1, A.P2, A.M1, A.D1)

Learning aims: B and C (B.P3, B.P4, C.P5, C.P6, C.P7, B.M2, C.M3, BC.D2, BC.D3)

Further information for teachers and assessors

Resource requirements

For this unit, learners must have access to a variety of social media websites that will allow them to plan and implement the use of the social media features.

Essential information for assessment decisions

Learning aim A

For distinction standard, learners will produce a comprehensive, well-balanced evaluation of how an organisation uses social media to support its business requirements, making realistic and well-explained business-related observations about the benefits and disadvantages, whilst considering their target customers or audience. Learners will provide real-life, relevant examples of how organisations have used social media effectively and how some have not effectively managed the risks involved. Learners must articulate their arguments fluently and views concisely, providing an evaluation which makes reasoned, valid judgements.

The evidence will demonstrate high-quality written/oral communication through the use of accurate and fluent technical vocabulary to support a well-structured and considered response, which clearly connects chains of reasoning.

For merit standard, learners will present a reasoned and well-explained assessment of a range of different ways that an organisation can use social media to interact with the target audience for their products and/or services. The discussion will be balanced and supported by clear examples. Learners will focus their comments on the organisation's business uses of the sites. The evidence must be technically accurate and demonstrate good quality written or oral communication.

For pass standard, learners will provide detailed information, supported by real-life examples, covering all the ways organisations can use social media to support their business requirements (as listed in the unit content). They will research the different audience profiles for the main social media sites and explain how the different sites appeal to their different audiences, and relate this to how different organisations can use social media. The evidence may have some inaccuracies and include a limited range of examples.

Learning aims B and C

For distinction standard, learners will draw on and show synthesis of knowledge across the learning aims, in order to evaluate both the plan to use social media and its implementation. Learners also need to show that they have considered the legal and ethical implications of the material they have posted on social media sites. Learners must provide a reasoned and realistic review of the outcomes, identifying both the positive and negative aspects. For example, they can explain why some things they planned to do did not happen or did not work out as they expected. Learners will make reasoned, appropriate suggestions as to how the use of social media could be improved in the future. They will undertake a detailed examination of the data collected on the interaction achieved and the profile of the people who have interacted with their social media posts. This information will clearly link to a discussion of how well this matches with their intentions. For example, learners may discover that the age and location profile of the people interacting with their posts does not match the target audience of the organisation concerned. In this case, they would need to discuss possible reasons for the mismatch and how this issue could be resolved.

Learners will take individual responsibility for their own work, for example identifying potential issues and resolving these, reviewing their work and making improvements, keeping their work safe and secure, showing responsible use of quoted materials. Creativity will be shown, for example, through taking innovative approaches to problem solving and through the originality of their solution. The evaluation of behaviours can consider learners' use of 'soft skills' in relation to the vocational context of the project, such as liaising with clients and time management. Learners

will evaluate their own behaviours throughout the project and the impact they have on the outcomes. Learners will refer to tangible evidence to support their evaluation, such as meeting notes, correspondence and time plans.

For merit standard, learners will provide a clear, accurate and well-reasoned justification of the choices they made in the planning of the use of social media. Learners will show a clear link to the organisation's business requirements. The usage data collected by learners will also assess how effective each of their posts have been at achieving their stated aim and how effective they have been in encouraging interaction with the audience. Learners also need to show that they have considered the legal and ethical implications of the material they have posted on social media sites. Learners will apply their knowledge through selection and application of appropriate tools and techniques to optimise the effectiveness of their future posts and other social media features. They will make accurate and reasoned suggestions as to how the outcomes could be improved, if the task were to be repeated.

For pass standard, learners will produce a plan which meets the organisation's business requirements and identifies the target audience. The plan will also identify timescales, keywords and include a content posting schedule. Learners should also show an awareness of legal and ethical implications of the content they plan to post.

Learners will review their plan, and ask others such as the client/employer and customers/audience to assist them in this process and provide evidence of their review.

Learners will select a variety of social media websites and implement their plan and interact with their followers. Some simulation may be required in order to provide the interaction, and fellow learners can play the role of 'customers' for each other. Learners can provide evidence in the form of annotated screen shots showing how they have implemented the plan they have created.

Learners must collect a range of data using features such as Facebook Insights, Google Analytics and Twitter Analytics, showing the interaction that individual posts have created and the profile of their audience. This data will be used to optimise their future posts, for example by adjusting the wording, content and timing of posts, as well as demonstrating use of any other new features.

Learners will assess the degree to which the content they developed and social media websites they post to, is likely to improve, or has improved, the search engine ranking for the organisation, for example by the use of appropriate keywords. The assessment may be unbalanced or contain some inaccuracies.

Links to other units

This unit links to:

- Unit 9: The Impact of Computing
- Unit 15: Website Development.

Employer involvement

This unit would benefit from employer involvement in the form of:

- provision of guest speakers
- technical workshops involving staff from local organisations/businesses
- contribution of design/ideas to unit assignment/scenario/case study/project materials, including own organisation/business materials as exemplars where appropriate
- feedback from staff from local organisations/businesses on plans/designs/items developed
- opportunities for observation of organisational/business application during work experience
- support from local organisation/business staff as mentors.